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June 19, 2020

H.E. Mr. Somdy Douangdy
Minister of Finance
Ministry of Finance
Vientiane
Lao People's Democratic Republic

H.E. Ms. Sengdeuane Lachanthaboune
Minister of Education and Sports
Ministry of Education
Vientiane
Lao People's Democratic Republic

***Approval of COVID-19 Accelerated Funding to Support
Lao People's Democratic Republic's Education Sector***

H.E. Mr. Douangdy, H.E. Ms. Lachanthaboune,

On behalf of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), I am pleased to inform you that with the delegated authority from the GPE Board of Directors, I have approved Lao People's Democratic Republic application for a COVID-19 accelerated funding request in the amount of US\$ 7 million. I have also approved a 7% agency fee for the grant agent, UNICEF, in the amount of US\$ 490,000.

The grant has a start date of June 19, 2020 and an end date of December 31, 2021. The full decision language of this approval can be found in the annex to this letter.

Should you have any questions or concerns, as the Secretariat's Country Lead for Lao People's Democratic Republic Ms. Aya Kibesaki, is on maternity leave, Ms. Alexandra Solano Rocha will serve as the focal point for Lao People's Democratic Republic.

We look forward to working with you closely to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education of Lao People's Democratic Republic's children.



Sincerely,



Alice P. Albright
Chief Executive Officer
Global Partnership for Education

cc:

Members of Education Sector Working Group

Ms. Khampaseuth Kitignavong, Deputy Director General, Dept. of Pre-Primary & Primary Education, Ministry of Education and Sports

Ms. Leotes Helin, Chief of Education, UNICEF

Ms. Chindavanh Vongsaly, Programme Manager, EU

Ms. Lisa Mortimer, DFAT Team Lead on Development Cooperation for the Australian Embassy in Vientiane

Ms. Saadhna Panday, Education Specialist, Global Education Partnerships Lead, UNICEF

Ms. Poonam Buttan, Public Partnerships Officer, UNICEF

Ms. Reiko Okumura, Public Partnerships Specialist, UNICEF

Mr. Sven Baeten, Acting Country Support Team Manager, GPE Secretariat

Mr. Nilse Ryman, Regional Manager, GPE Secretariat

Ms. Alexandra Solano Rocha, Country Lead and Senior Education Specialist, GPE Secretariat

Ms. Aya Kibesaki, Country Lead and Senior Education Specialist, GPE Secretariat

Annex 1 – DECISION LANGUAGE

In line with the delegated authority granted by the Board of Directors, the GPE CEO approves the COVID-19 accelerated funding request for Lao PDR in the amount of US\$ 7,000,000 plus an additional US\$490,000 in agency fees to UNICEF as Grant Agent. The grant has a start date of June 19, 2020, and an end date of December 31, 2021.

The GPE CEO recognized with appreciation the leadership and commitment of the Government of Lao PDR in preparing a national response plan and grant proposal that will mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the education sector as well as support the recovery of the education system from the crisis.

The GPE Board approved the COVID-19 funding mechanism on a first come, first served approach for the first US\$ 125 million of the original US\$ 225 million COVID-19 country funding window. Although the remaining US\$ 100 million has been subsequently significantly increased to US\$ 350 million by the Board, the demand for the COVID-19 funding mechanism still exceeds the available funds and the maximum allocation for Lao PDR is now US\$ 7,000,000, lower than the initial allocation and requested amount of US\$ 10,000,000.

Unless otherwise indicated by the decision language request for Report-Back, and keeping within the original budget of each component, the government and grant agent have full authority to prioritize within the approved activities of the original application, after consultation with the local education group.

Recognizing the GPE Board's intent to proceed with the COVID-19 funding on a timeline which acknowledges the COVID-19 emergency, the Government and Grant Agent are asked to move forward with implementation immediately while addressing the following points and reporting back to the Secretariat by July 10, 2020:

Request for Report-Back

1. The Grant Agent is requested to provide a revised program document (including results framework, budget and implementation plan), following consultation with the LEG and agreement by the Government. This revised program document needs to prioritize activities so as to keep within the new grant allocation and must address the requirements noted below. Upon receipt of the revised program document, the Secretariat will verify compliance with each of the requirements below, but there will be no additional grant approval issued, nor further re-assessment of the program.
 - i. Activities with clear and immediate impact on the continuation and safeguarding of education for vulnerable populations during the COVID-19 crisis be prioritized over activities that provide lesser immediate value for money for this purpose.

- ii. The Grant Agent is requested to include the number and percentages of beneficiary population reached for all core indicators.

The Secretariat also raises the following points of observation, which are recommendations rather than requirements:

Observations

- a) Given the urgency of the crisis, GPE expects grant implementation to commence on schedule and encourages the Grant Agent to submit a cash transfer request within two weeks of approval to facilitate the timely release of funds in support of program implementation.
- b) An appropriate reduction is suggested in implementation support costs given the lower overall budget.

Reporting

Please note that during the implementation period, the GPE Secretariat will require the Grant Agent to fill out a quarterly survey which will request core data on program implementation. At the end of the implementation period, the Grant Agent is expected to submit a completion report to the GPE Secretariat. Detailed information on the reporting requirement is available in the Guidelines for COVID-19 Accelerated Funding on GPE [website](#).

Reprogramming

The Government and the Grant Agent may reprogram this grant, in consultation with the Local Education Group and where active the Education cluster, for an amount not to exceed 25% of the allocation without prior Secretariat approval but must disclose such cases to the Secretariat. For an amount of 25% or more, as well as for any extension, advance approval from the Secretariat must be sought. The process for advanced approval will be that of non-minor revisions of ESPIG which can be found here: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/policy-education-sector-program-implementation-grants>